## How to Care for Someone with Influenza

## **REST, HYDRATE, WATCH**

- Rest is very important. Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible.
- Keep the person hydrated.
  - Offer small amounts of fluid frequently, even if the ill person does not feel thirsty
  - Watch for signs of dehydration. Someone who is dehydrated may have weakness or unresponsiveness, or decreased output of urine
  - See the "Fluids and Nutrition section" below for information about what to do if the patient is vomiting.
- Watch for complications. Call a doctor right away if the ill person:
  - Has difficulty breathing or fast breathing
  - Has a bluish color to the skin or lips
  - o Begins coughing up blood
  - Complains of pain or pressure in the chest
  - Shows signs of dehydration and cannot take enough fluids
  - Appears confused or does not respond appropriately
  - Has convulsions
  - Gets worse after appearing to improve
  - Is an infant younger than 2 months old with fever, poor feeding, urinating less than 3 times per day, or other signs of illness
- Stay home. If the ill person must leave home, he or she should wear a surgical mask, if available.

## **MEDICATIONS**

- Use ibuprofen or acetaminophen or other measures for fever, sore throat and general discomfort.
- Do <u>not</u> use aspirin in children or teenagers with influenza because it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness

## **FLUIDS AND NUTRITION**

- If the ill person is not eating solid foods, include fluids that contain sugars and salts, such as broth, sports drinks (diluted half and half with water) and sodas, but <u>not</u> diet drinks.
- If the patient is vomiting, do not give any fluid or food for at least 1 hour. Then offer a clear fluid in very small amounts. Let the stomach rest for an hour after each time the person vomits before giving more fluid.
- Babies who are breast-fed and vomiting can continue to nurse, but offer smaller amounts.

For more detailed information, please visit: www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/pandemicflu/care.aspx



